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ABSTRACT

In February 1994, a study was conducted at Macomb Community College (MCC), in Warren, Michigan, to determine the reasons that students failed to return to MCC. A computer-generated random sample of 1,585 names was drawn from a population of more than 13,000 students identified as non-returning students (NRS's), i.e., who had not enrolled in any course in any term of the subsequent year and had not earned a formal award from MCC. Questionnaires were mailed to the last known address of the sample population and completed forms were received from 545 former students. Study findings, based on survey responses and comparisons to previous NRS studies, included the following: (1) respondents represented more than 100 programs from every academic division of MCC, a 10% increase over the previous year's sample; (2) objectives in attending MCC have indicated a steady shift from job-related to transfer over the past five years; (3) 18% of the respondents indicated that their objectives had been fully completed, while 67% indicated that they had been partially completed; (4) 68% of the respondents indicated that they planned to continue working toward their objectives; and (5) for the past 5 years' studies, the major reasons for not returning to MCC have been work/school hours conflict (19% of the responses), financial problems (16%), transfer to another college (14%), and personal/family reasons other than illness or injury (13%). The survey instrument and cover letter are included. (MAB)

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ED 369 473

Macomb Community College

SURVEY REPORT

1992-93 NON-RETURNING STUDENTS

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Proj. #94-011
May 2, 1994

JC 940 309

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SURVEY REPORT
1992-93 NON-RETURNING STUDENT
May 1994

During the month of February, 1994, the Department of Research and Evaluation at Macomb Community College conducted a survey among a sample of non-returning students. A non-returning student (NRS) is defined as one who enrolled in any course in any term of the base school year (1992-93 for this survey) who did not enroll at MCC in any course in any term of the subsequent year (1993-94) and who did not earn a formal award from MCC by the end of that year.

SUMMARY

NRS' objectives in attending Macomb continue to be job-related but that is declining somewhat in favor of the desire to earn transfer credits. Most respondents indicated their objectives had been partially fulfilled (67%) while another 18% indicated they had been fully completed. More than two-thirds of respondents indicated they intended to pursue their objectives further in the future.

The most common reasons given for not returning were a conflict between work and school hours (19%); transfer to another college (17%); financial problems (15%); and personal/family problems other than illness or injury (14%). Another 10% indicated "other" reasons.

Mean scores for course-related evaluations in the major, based on a 5 point Likert-type scale, continue to be "good" (4 on the scale) with a range of 3.70 (lab experience) to 3.99 (quality of instruction).

Usefulness of MCC training relative to the respondents' work was 3.54 (between neutral and somewhat useful), also on a 5-point scale.

METHODOLOGY

The sample excluded students who were identified as deceased, or who registered as guest students or early admits (before graduating from high school). The computer-generated random sample of 1,585 names was drawn from a population of more than 13,000 students identified as non-returning.

This process is changed from previous years, where the sample included 25 people from every program; all students from programs containing less than 25 students; 50 people from selected

technical programs; excluded undecideds; and excluded all students in DOA or MRC programs.

The surveys were sent by first-class mail to the student's last known address accompanied by a cover letter from the Project Director. A second mailing followed approximately 10 days later to those NRS who had not responded to the first letter. The survey instrument and cover letter are attached as Appendix A and B, respectively.

RESPONSE RATE

The number of respondents to this year's NRS survey was up slightly from last year's but the percentage remained the same. This year, 552 people responded to the survey for a 34.8% return rate. Last year, 545 NRS responded out of 1,565 (34.8%).

We received a number of calls from students who had "stopped out." Some of them indicated they were registered for this semester or had plans to register for Fall.

Response rates for the last five years have averaged about 34% with a range of 31.6% to 35.8%. The sample sizes have decreased because of changes in sampling procedures, but the response rate has remained essentially the same. Table 1 displays the longitudinal data for the NRS survey.

TABLE 1: 5-YEAR RESPONSE RATES

	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	Avg
Sample size	2111	1644	1644	1565	1585	1393
# Respondents	756	519	531	545	552	580
% of Sample	35.8%	31.6%	32.3%	34.8%	34.8%	34%

RESULTS

Shown below are 5-year responses for each question on the survey. Mean scores are indicated where appropriate. It is important to remember that respondents had not registered for a class during the year preceding the survey, i.e., those students responding in 1990 last attended during the 1988-89 academic year, etc.

Respondents represented more than one hundred programs which included every academic division of the College. This represents a 10% increase over last year, due in part to the change in methodology.

OBJECTIVE IN ATTENDING MACOMB

As Table 2 shows, objectives in attending Macomb have indicated a steady shift from job-related to transfer over the past five years among non-returning students. The combined percentages of "improve job skills" and "prepare for future job" have declined (although they are still the largest number) while "earn transfer credit" has steadily increased.

TABLE 2. PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IN ATTENDING MACOMB

Objective	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94
Improve job skills	29%	22%	22%	21%	21%
Prepare for future job	39	42	42	40	36
Earn transfer credit	21	25	27	28	29
Other	2	1	2	2	1
No answer	1	<1	<1	<1	<1

COMPLETION OF OBJECTIVE

An increasing number of respondents indicate their objective in attending MCC has been fully completed, while over five years there has been fluctuation in the number of respondents indicating their objective has been partially completed. Table 3 presents a historical perspective.

TABLE 3. EXTENT OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN COMPLETED

	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94
Fully completed	16%	10%	15%	15%	18%
Partially completed	70	72	68	74	67
Not yet begun	13	16	15	10	14
No answer	1	2	1	1	<1

INTENT TO CONTINUE OBJECTIVE

More than two-thirds of respondents indicate they plan to continue their objectives. In fact there is only 1 point difference between those who indicated they had partially completed objectives and those who plan to continue their objective further.

TABLE 4. INTENT TO PURSUE OBJECTIVES FURTHER

	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94
Yes	66%	70%	69%	75%	68%
No	13	9	14	11	13
Don't know/no answer	21	22	17	14	19

REASON FOR NOT RETURNING

Five reasons for not returning to MCC have consistently been named over the years. In decending order of 5-year average response, they are:

1. Work/school hours conflict (19% over 5 years)
2. Financial problems (16% over five years)
3. Transfer to another college (14% over 5 years)
4. Personal/family reasons other than illness or injury (13% over 5 years)
5. Miscellaneous (11% over 5 years)

Actual percentages for all reasons named on the survey over the last five years are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5. REASON FOR NOT RETURNING TO MCC

Reason	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94
Completed desired courses	9%	5%	5%	8%	11%
Transportation problems	2	<1	<1	2	<1
Transferred to other college	12	13	15	16	17
Found job related to courses	4	2	3	2	<1
Work/school hours conflict	21	20	19	18	19
Financial problems	14	16	20	18	15
Moved	6	5	7	4	3
Poor grades	1	1	1	2	<1
Dissatisfied w/teaching	3	2	3	2	4
Dissatisfied w/content	1	2	<1	<1	<1
Pers/family illness or injury	3	5	5	5	4
Other pers/family reason	12	15	12	14	14
Other (miscellaneous) reasons	12	12	9	9	10
No answer	2	<1	<1	<1	<1

INTEREST IN TAKING MORE COURSES AT MCC

Over five years, more than two-thirds of respondents and as high as 80% of respondents have expressed interest in taking

additional classes at Macomb. Percentages over the five years are:

1990 74% yes
1991 80% yes
1992 75% yes
1993 76% yes
1994 73% yes

Between five percent and six percent of respondents do not answer this question.

COURSE RATINGS

If respondents had completed more than one course in their chosen program, they were asked to rate five measures: quality of instruction, grading and testing, content of courses, class size, and laboratory experiences. (These are the same measures rated by graduates on follow-up surveys.)

This year, about 40% (range: 38%-53%) did not answer these questions. Exact figures for no answers in previous years are not available, although based on Graduate Follow-Up surveys, laboratory ratings always have a higher rate of no response because fewer students have lab experiences.

Summary information about this section is presented in Table 6. Mean scores were based on a five-point Likert-type scale (5=very good, 4=good, 3=average, 2=poor 1=very poor).

TABLE 6. COURSE RATINGS IN MAJOR PROGRAM OF STUDY
(By respondents who'd completed more than one course in program)

Criteria	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94
# of respondents	756	519	531	545	552
Quality of instruction					
% resp answering Q.	68%	65%	71%	74%	60%
mean score	4.05	4.07	4.11	4.09	3.99
Grading and testing					
% resp answering Q.	68%	64%	71%	73%	60%
mean score	4.00	3.99	3.95	3.97	3.90
Content of courses					
% resp answering Q.	68%	64%	71%	73%	60%
mean score	4.02	3.98	4.01	4.03	3.92
Class size					
% resp answering Q.	68%	64%	71%	73%	60%
mean score	3.80	3.84	3.90	3.90	3.84
Laboratory experiences					
% resp answering Q.	51%	47%	54%	56%	46%
mean score	3.76	3.74	3.75	3.72	3.70

USEFULNESS OF MCC TRAINING

Those respondents who were employed were asked to rate the usefulness of their MCC training in their daily work . Ratings were based on a 5-point scale: very useful (5), somewhat useful (4), neutral (3), not too useful (2), or useless (1). This year's mean score is about half-way between neutral and somewhat useful, down a bit from last year's mean. Five-year data are presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7. USEFULNESS OF MCC TRAINING IN DAILY WORK

Year	% Respondents answering Q.	Mean
1990	59%	3.63
1991	53%	3.56
1992	60%	3.54
1993	58%	3.65
1994	54%	3.54

VERBATIM COMMENTS

A substantial number of respondents wrote comments on their surveys. Out of 200 comments, 15% related to faculty; 14% were kudos to Macomb; 14%, scheduling; 11%, student services--mostly relating to difficulties with registration and financial aid; 5%, programs. The largest category was miscellaneous at 19%. The remaining comments (all groups less than 5%) dealt with counseling, course offerings, transfer, multiple issues commented on by one respondent, course content, computers or computer soft/hardware, lab access, and jobs.

Macomb Community College

NON-RETURNING STUDENT SURVEY

NRS MiSIS

Please respond as appropriate.

■ SECTION A

1. What was your **primary** objective in attending MCC? **(CHECK ONE ONLY.)**
   - ☐ 1 Improving job skills
   - ☐ 2 Preparing for a future job
   - ☐ 3 Earning university transfer credit
   - ☐ 4 Following a personal interest
   - ☐ 5 None of the above
2. To what extent has this objective been completed?
   - ☐ 1 Fully completed
   - ☐ 2 Partially completed
   - ☐ 3 Not yet begun
3. Do you plan to pursue this objective further?
   - ☐ 1 Yes
   - ☐ 2 No
   - ☐ 3 Don't know
4. What was the **one principal** reason you did **NOT** enroll at MCC this past year? **(CHECK ONE ONLY.)**
   - ☐ 01 Completed the courses I wanted
   - ☐ 02 Had transportation problems
   - ☐ 03 Transferred to another college
   - ☐ 04 Found a job related to the courses I had taken
   - ☐ 05 Job hours made class hours difficult or impossible
   - ☐ 06 Had financial problems
   - ☐ 07 Moved to a new residence
   - ☐ 08 Got poor grades
   - ☐ 09 Dissatisfied with the style of instruction
   - ☐ 10 Dissatisfied with the content of the course(s)
   - ☐ 11 Stopped out for personal or family illness or injury
   - ☐ 12 Stopped out for other personal or family reasons
   - ☐ 13 Other
5. Are you interested in taking other courses at MCC?
   - ☐ 1 Yes
   - ☐ 2 No

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■ SECTION B

6. **If you have completed MORE THAN ONE course in your MAJOR PROGRAM OF STUDY,** please rate the courses according to how well they fulfilled your individual needs. **Students who have never selected a major program of study and who remain "undecided" or "undeclared" should skip to Question 7.**

	Very Good 5	Good 4	Average 3	Poor 2	Very Poor 1
a. Quality of instruction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Grading and testing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Content of courses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Class size	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Laboratory experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. **If you are currently employed or in full-time military service,** please rate the usefulness of the training you received at MCC in doing your day-to-day work. **If you are neither currently employed nor in full-time military service, skip to Question 8.**
   - ☐ 1 Useless
   - ☐ 2 Not too useful
   - ☐ 3 Neutral
   - ☐ 4 Somewhat useful
   - ☐ 5 Very useful
8. We would appreciate any comments regarding how the College could improve the courses you have completed or the services you have received. Please enter your comments, if any, here. (For information or a Schedule of Classes, a Catalog, or a program brochure, please call 445-7999.)

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Thank you for answering this survey. Please return this form in the pre-paid envelope as soon as possible.

APPENDIX B

Macomb Community College

February 1994

Dear Former Student,

You have been identified as a student who has not graduated but who has not attended Macomb College during the 1993-94 academic year. We'd appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to complete and return the enclosed survey. A business reply envelope is provided for your convenience in returning the questionnaire.

This survey has been sent to a sample of the 6,000 students who attended Macomb during the 1992-93 school year but who did not return this year. This is an annual process which enables the College to improve services to all students based on our analysis of the survey.

If you have any questions about the survey, you may call me between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 445-7817. Thank you for your cooperation in providing the information requested on the enclosed questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Judy Adams

Judith Adams
Project Director

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